

ROLLOUT SCHEDULE

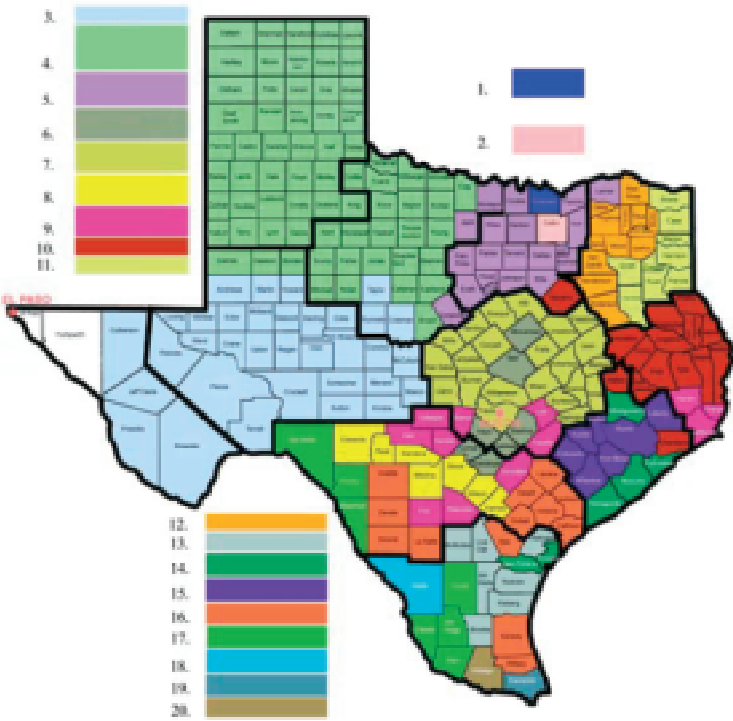
Location	Date
Grayson County – Area 1	October 1, 2005
Collin County – Area 2	February 1, 2006
West Texas – Areas 3 and 4	June, 2006
Panhandle	September, 2006
Remainder of Texas	TBA

Did you know, that the following WIC EBT Electronic Cash Register systems are certified by the State of Texas?

System	Installer
IBM SA, IBM ACE	Malloy’s
ICL Fujitsu	CRS
JPGA	JPGA

MTG Management Consultants, L.L.C., 2005

EBT ROLLOUT IN TEXAS



GREAT SUCCESS IN GRAYSON COUNTY

Ms. Sydney Townsend

WIC Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) expanded into Grayson County on October 1, 2005, and the rollout was a resounding success for everyone. All agree that transitioning to EBT was incredibly smooth and easy. Staff were quick to note that the lessons learned in the El Paso pilot helped ensure a trouble-free start for WIC EBT in Grayson.

The rollout received two big thumbs-up from the State staff that works with WIC grocers. Ray Krzesniak, Manager of the Food Issuance and Redemption Services (FIRS) Unit, reported that the operation went very well, so well in fact that his staff members found they had to lend hardly any support to the grocers. Additionally, Joe Graves, WIC EBT Development Analyst, commented on the smoothness of the transition for the large integrated stores. “Grayson County was a successful extension of the pilot for the integrated stores. This is the first time that Kroger is using the integrated system, and it has been doing very well. Also, WAL*MART has upgraded its hardware to

have a combined smart card and credit card payment terminal, rather than a separate smart card terminal that was used previously,” said Mr. Graves. With the smooth transition in Grayson behind them, Mr. Graves is optimistic about the expansion of integrated WIC EBT ECR systems to six new grocery chains in Collin County by January 30, 2006.

The smaller grocers who purchased and installed new ECR systems had a very successful transition, as well. Asad Salahuddin, Grocer Communications Manager, emphasized that the grocery stores were all extremely proactive in getting their stores ready for EBT. Additionally, the commercial ECR vendors were very cooperative, which made meeting the implementation timeline much more manageable. Mr. Salahuddin pointed out that 100 percent of the commercial grocers had their new commercial WIC EBT ECR systems installed, converted, and Level III Certified before the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) internal deadline of September 1, 2005. With 100 percent of integrated and commercial stores ready before the October 1, 2005, launch of WIC EBT, the conversion went as well as he had hoped it would. “There was the usual nervousness about change, but most of that was addressed through grocer training,” Mr. Salahuddin went on to say. “Most grocers were anxious to go ahead and use the new cards to get the process down.” In anticipation of another smooth rollout in Collin County, the State has already begun certification of some stores in the area and is happy to be ahead of schedule.

The ease the grocers experienced was also reflected in the clinic transition experience. Linda Brumble, Unit Manager, Nutrition Education Clinical Services Unit, said that the clinics experienced very few issues in the transition. She noted that a couple of terminals didn’t update correctly at first, but that they were easily fixed by Mike Trammell, Senior Systems Analyst. Ms. Brumble also said that there was some challenge in helping clients with old paper vouchers for formula convert completely to electronic benefits, but that the clinic staff was able to navigate the process with a little guidance. Mr. Trammell noted that staff members were able to issue cards easily to new clients and existing clients, and that the clients themselves were anxious to get their cards. The clinic staff felt the same way about the transition. Terry Reese, WIC Local Agency Director, expressed her appreciation of the training the State automation staff gave her clinic staff. “They gave us plenty of hands-on experience so that we are really comfortable and kept everything at an easy pace to keep us from getting frazzled. We felt confident to begin EBT on Monday!” The small issues that did pop up were so easily fixed that Ms. Brumble said she found herself “in the way of the clinic staff by the second morning. It all went so well that we were able to go home early and leave the clinic staff room to continue to do their jobs well.” The new system continues to work well for the clinics, and very few questions have been called in, reported Kim Stewart, WIC Systems Support Group Manager.

Clearly the EBT rollout was a great success in Grayson County. All involved felt that the lessons learned in El Paso were a large contributor to easing the transition in Grayson. Also, the advanced preparation in the stores and clinics made the October 1 shift much easier. As the State WIC EBT team members focus on the next rollout, they are confident that they can carry their past success forward to Collin County. ❁

January/February WIC Grocer/Vendor Training

January-EBT Policy and Procedure Training:

01/10/06, 1/11/06

9 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 3:30 p.m.
EBT Rollout Area- Collin County
LaQuinta Inn and Suites
4800 West Plano Parkway
Plano, Texas
972-599-0700

02/07/06

9 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 3:30 p.m.
Lucio WIC Clinic
1204 Jose Colunga Jr. Street
Brownsville, Texas
956-427-8086

February-Paper Voucher Training:
02/03/06

9 to 11:30 am or 2 to 4:30 p.m.
Fort Bend Family Health Center
400 Austin Street
Richmond, Texas
281-342-4530

02/09/06, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

02/10/06, 9 to 11:30 p.m.
Cameron County
Dept of Health and Human Services
1122 Morgan Boulevard
Harlingen
956-427-8086

02/09/06

9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Weslaco Public Library
525 South Kansas
Weslaco, Texas
956-968-4533

02/02/06

9 to 11:30 a.m. or 2 to 4:30 p.m.
Harris County Health Department
3737 Red Bluff, Pasadena
Pasadena, Texas
713-740-5000

02/01/06

9 to 11:30 a.m. or 2 to 4:30 p.m.
Harris County Health Department
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas
713-439-6145

02/08/06

9 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 3:30 p.m.
So. TX Community Tech Center
3700 West Military Highway
Corner of Ware Rd and Military Hwy
McAllen, Texas
956-992-6100

Resources of Interest: For more information on WIC EBT and Paper training visit the Food Issuance and Redemption Services page, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/ebt/ebt1.shtm>. Coming Soon! The Texas Department of State Health Services will be adding a link to bottom of the WIC EBT page, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/ebt/ebt1.shtm>, this new page will have information about EBT Rollout in Texas.

READY, SET, ROLLOUT!
Ms. Cori J. Ramsey and Ms. Sydney O. Townsend

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is busy planning the statewide rollout of the WIC EBT smart card. With the El Paso area and Grayson County already using the card, implementation in other parts of Texas will soon follow. DSHS will work with each area to assist in the transition from paper vouchers to paperless food delivery.

ECR System Selection, Installation, Certification, and Reimbursement

The State of Texas received federal approval for the statewide rollout of WIC EBT on September 16, 2005. While the official rollout is planned in phases, all Texas grocers are encouraged to start the conversion process for EBT. This means that any WIC authorized grocer in the State of Texas may upgrade their electronic cash register (ECR) system to accept the Texas WIC EBT card or replace the system and receive reimbursement from the State for all or part of the costs. Grocers must meet rollout deadlines for their area, but they can also gain a competitive edge by installing the system before the rollout reaches their area. Having an EBT system installed will allow grocers in areas that the rollout hasn't reached to accept traveling WIC clients with EBT cards. Every WIC authorized grocer must install/upgrade and operate a WIC EBT Certified ECR system. There are five important steps to becoming EBT ready:

- Select a WIC EBT Certified ECR System and notify the State.
- Get the EBT system installed.
- Attend cashier and manager training.
- Obtain Level III system Certification.
- Request reimbursement for the ECR system.

First, grocers must choose the WIC EBT Certified ECR system that is the "best fit" for their operations. There are currently several ECR systems that are WIC EBT Certified by the State of Texas. If a store's ECR software has already been modified by the State to accept the WIC EBT card, the grocer should contact its ECR manufacturer to obtain a free update to the ECR core software. Grocers currently operating without an ECR system or using an ECR system whose manufacturer and software version are not WIC Certified, should determine which WIC Certified ECR system is best for them. Grocers should consider the following questions: Do I want a multi-tender, integrated system that will be used for all of my transactions? Or, do I want a single-tender, stand beside system that will not interfere with my current in-store system and that will be used for WIC transactions only? What kind of reports do I want my system to generate? Do I want a basic system or a system with many bells and whistles? As soon as grocers have reviewed the systems available and made their selection, they need to notify the State.

Second, after selecting a system and notifying the State, the next step for grocers is to work with their system integrator to schedule installation of their new or upgraded system. The system integrators are busy installing systems all over the State, so it is important to get on their schedule early, especially if rollout is coming soon to the area.

Third, after the EBT enabled ECR system is installed, store managers and staff must be trained to use it. System integrators are responsible for training; grocers must confirm that store personnel are trained in the use of the system. It is very important that as many cashiers as possible attend this training so that WIC transactions will go smoothly in the store. In addition to the training provided by system integrators, store managers are required to attend training in WIC EBT policy and procedures. A schedule of upcoming WIC manager training sessions can be found on page 1.

Fourth, once the system has been installed and store personnel have been

trained, the system must be Level III Certified by the State. Generally, a WIC employee or other representative of the State will travel to the store and make a WIC food purchase using a WIC EBT card. The purpose of Level III Certification is to ensure the system is working properly in the lanes; it is a brief 15- 30-minute process that, if successful, results in the store receiving an electronic payment from the State.

Last, but not least, following Level III Certification, grocers can apply for reimbursement of their ECR system. In order to receive reimbursement, grocers must 1) submit a purchase agreement signed by both the grocer and the system integrator that accurately reflects all system components, including software; 2) submit a verification of training form signed by the grocer; 3) have attended state-mandated managers training; and 4) passed Level III Certification.

A grocer whose ECR system software has already been modified by the State to accept WIC EBT cards will receive the ECR software upgrade at no cost and up to \$200 per lane to upgrade front-end terminals to accept the WIC EBT smart card. The \$200 per lane is available for all lanes reported to the State where WIC participants traditionally purchase WIC foods.

Some grocers do not have an ECR system. Others have an ECR system whose software has not been modified by the State to accept WIC EBT cards. These grocers must select and purchase a new ECR system to continue to accept WIC. The amount of reimbursement will be based on a store's annualized monthly WIC food sales. Traditional grocers are entitled to reimbursement for equipping one to four store lanes; WIC Only stores are entitled to reimbursement for one to three lanes. The number of lanes for which grocers are reimbursed depends on their average monthly WIC food sales over the past 12 months. Reimbursement levels are determined by the Food Issuance and Redemption Services (FIRS) Unit. Grocers should contact FIRS to learn the number of WIC authorized lanes and the maximum reimbursement available, which excluding state sales tax will not exceed:

- \$11,000 for one lane.
- \$18,000 for two lanes.
- \$25,000 for three lanes.
- \$33,000 for four lanes.

The purchase of a commercial WIC EBT Certified ECR system entitles a store to site readiness, installation, and a 3-year warranty and maintenance, including help desk and on-site support. The 3-year period begins upon grocer acceptance. After 3 years, grocers are responsible for their own support and maintenance.

Grocers may, at their own cost, purchase additional equipment to equip all store lanes or upgrade certain hardware components. The minimum reported time between filing a reimbursement request and receiving payment is 6 weeks.

WIC Certified ECR System Options

Systems vary by manufacturer and system configuration and design. The following manufacturers' ECR systems are currently WIC EBT Certified for use in the State of Texas:

(continued on next page)

Progress to Date Numbers: As of December 5, 2005, all WIC authorized stores (100%) in El Paso and Grayson County accept WIC EBT. More than 46,000 WIC EBT cards have been issued in El Paso, and more than 1,800 WIC EBT cards have been issued in Grayson County.

ECR Manufacturer	Company Name	Products	Contact
ICL/Fujitsu	Cash Register Systems of Texas	ICL/Fujitsu StoreNext	David Fuller/Steven Waters 800-657-7108 dfuller@crstx.com www.crstx.com
IBM	Malloy's Cash Register Services	IBM ACE	Dennis Malloy/Terry Fischer/ Mike Hoyer 800-288-9429 dmalloy@malloys.com mike@malloys.com terry@malloys.com www.malloys.com
JPMA	JPMA	POS Designer	Patrick O'Neill 1-877-JPMPLS/1-877 576-2767, poneill@jpma.com www.jpma.com

The State is currently working with other ECR system manufacturers and integrators to increase the number of ECR system software products and systems that are WIC EBT Certified for use in Texas. In the near future, the following are expected to achieve WIC EBT Certification: National Cash Register (NCR), Openfield Solutions, IBM SA, ACR, and more.

Each grocer is highly encouraged to begin contacting these vendors soon, as rollout in your area is fast approaching!❁

WIC WELCOMES HANK LUNDBERG
Ms. Sydney Townsend



There is a new face at Texas WIC EBT, Hank Lundberg. Mr. Lundberg joined the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) as the WIC EBT project manager in March 2005. He filled the position vacated by Ray Krzesniak, who assumed the responsibilities of manager, WIC Food Issuance and Redemption Services (FIRS) Unit, previously Vendor Management.

Mr. Lundberg brings 29 years of government service to the WIC program. Before joining the EBT team, he spent 28 years at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), where he was the manager of workforce automation support, which coordinated workforce development of applications like TWIST and WorkInTexas. Additionally, he served as program manager for the benefits redesign system within TWC, which was responsible for the redesigned unemployment insurance benefits application. These positions gave him extensive experience in the management of large systems development, a skill that is a perfect fit for Texas WIC EBT.

When asked what about the project manager's position intrigued him, he replied, "What drew me to this project is the challenge of implementing a new technology that is relatively new in the United States, within the WIC program for statewide development." He also spoke about the opportunity to use the large systems development management skills he had developed at TWC.

Mr. Lundberg has been very happy with his choice to move to the WIC EBT project; however, leaving his employer of 28 years required him to make some adjustments. One of the biggest challenges he faced in his new position was jumping into a development effort that started 8 years ago. "The processes and procedures are very much the same, but the people and

Question: I own and operate a store outside of the Paso and the post pilot expansion areas of Grayson and Collin Counties, and the West Texas and the Panhandle service regions. I understand I can benefit by buying and installing a WIC EBTready system today. Is there a checklist of things I need to do to be reimbursed? If so, where? What are the steps?

Answer: Yes, you are correct. Any Texas WIC vendor can "get ahead" of the competition by upgrading its current ECR system software and terminals, if appropriate, or by purchasing and installing a new, WIC EBT certified ECR system. Once the system is installed, managers and staff are trained, and the store system is Level III certified as "WIC EBT Ready" the vendor can file for reimbursement from the State, which could take 4 to 6 weeks or longer. The steps are:

Step 1: Call your ECR system manufacturer or representative to learn about your options. [NOTE: If your ECR system cannot be upgraded to accept WIC EBT, you must purchase and install a WIC EBT certified ECR system.]

Step 2: Notify your ECR system integrators/technicians of the need to upgrade your ECR system software or, if no software upgrade is available, contact the preferred ECR system manufacturer/representatives to purchase a WIC EBT certified ECR system.

Step 3: Establish a schedule for system upgrade/installation, training and Level 3 system certification; contract for work to be performed.

Step 4: Complete staff training, cashier training provided by the system developer/installer and manager training in WIC policy and procedures provided or authorized by the State.

Step 5: Complete Level III certification, involving a "live" in-store WIC EBT purchase and electronic settlement.

Step 6: Request financial reimbursement from the State for allowable store ECR system upgrades or replacement.

program are new," said Mr. Lundberg. "I had to learn the WIC program and the technology surrounding the EBT effort." With the program and technology knowledge now under his belt, Mr. Lundberg is comfortable in his current position.

One of the biggest surprises was "the true dedication that so many employees have to this project to ensure its success, in spite of the hurdles that have been constantly encountered." Mr. Lundberg said he sometimes get frustrated that he cannot move the project forward faster, but he realized the current pace is actually appropriate. "We are moving at a slow and steady pace and still making advancements. The slow progress is due to the fact that the project is dedicated to ensuring that the product that is provided is of the highest quality." And quality is worth the wait.

Even as the EBT rollout plows forward, Mr. Lundberg has an eye on the future. After the EBT rollout is completed in 2007, he sees two major items of interest on the horizon for WIC. "The next big thing is going to be WIN Evolution and integrating the existing development efforts related to WIC EBT in the new WIC automated application, while still embracing new technology that will make operations more efficient and effective for WIC staff in clinics. In conjunction with WIN Evolution would be the transition to the Health and Human Services Commission's Integrated Benefits Card designed to bridge the needs of a number of agencies, including WIC, TANF, Food Stamps, and Medicaid," noted Mr. Lundberg.

Mr. Lundberg has proven his dedication through 28 years of service to one agency. WIC can anticipate that he will show the same commitment and share his expertise with WIC for many years to come.

Welcome to WIC EBT, Hank Lundberg.❁